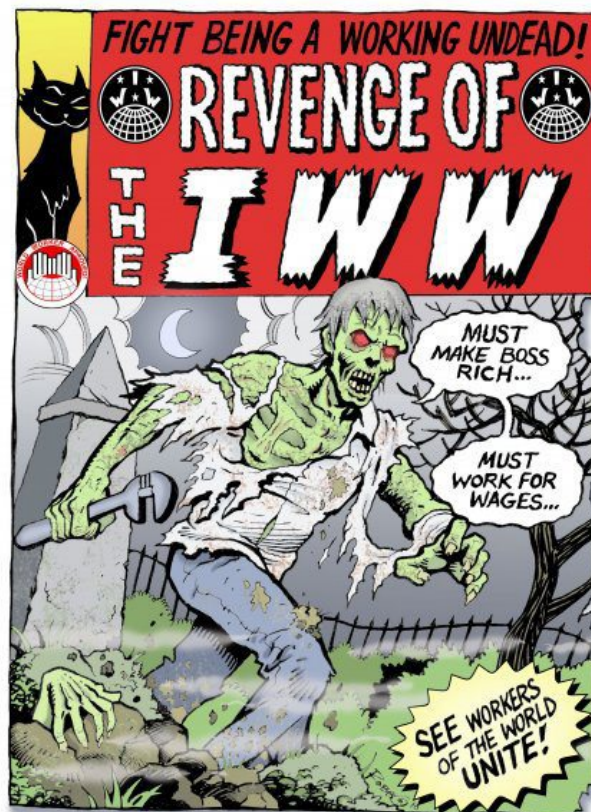
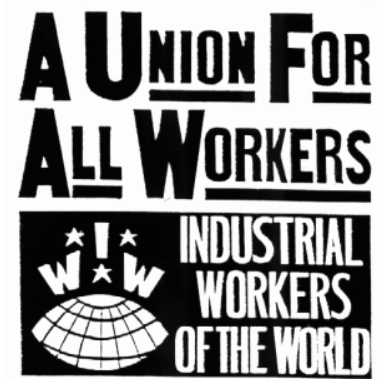


IWW – Madison Branch  
P.O. Box 2442  
Madison, WI  
53701  
USA



**WANT TO LEARN HOW TO ORGANIZE? HOW TO TAKE ACTION AT YOUR WORKPLACE? BE A TROUBLEMAKER?**

The Madison IWW is planning on hosting an Organizer Training 101 this fall! Watch for details, or contact us for more information!

[madison@iww.org](mailto:madison@iww.org)



# PRAIRIE FIRE

Newsletter of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in Madison, Wisconsin  
Volume 11, Number 2  
Labor Day 2018

## MADISON IWW ESTABLISHES STRIKE FUND!

by Felix Bunke, Secretary,  
Madison IWW GMB

The Madison IWW would like to announce that we have recently established a strike fund to support fellow workers who find themselves in trouble due to their efforts in organizing or taking action.

In times like these, with the “traditional” union model of certification, negotiating contracts, etc., being attacked on all sides, it is more important than ever to learn lessons from those who organized as workers and took direct action on the job. We need to “revive the strike,” as Joe Burns put it in his book.

In the IWW, we generally practice what is called “solidarity unionism” (as coined by Staughton



Lynd in another book), based on rank-and-file, “bottom-up” organizing and solidarity and on direct action. We may seek certification and negotiate contracts at times, such as when the Burgerville Workers Union in the Portland, Oregon area recently

won multiple elections at Burgerville locations. But, even so, we are always focused on rank-and-file driven organizing and direct action.

There are always risks involved when trying to organize workers or take action at a workplace. While we advocate for direct action, it would be foolish to deny the risks involved, and it would be wise to be thoughtful about how we plan and execute actions and how we prepare for the possibility of people getting hurt by organizing or acting.



That’s where the strike fund comes in. It is a restricted fund, separate from the rest of the branch’s funds, that is only to be used in cases when Fellow Workers of our branch, or workers assisting our campaigns, find themselves in trouble.

This could include cases when a worker is fired or otherwise retaliated against for organizing or taking action. Yes, such retaliation is often

illegal, but, of course, it still happens, anyway.

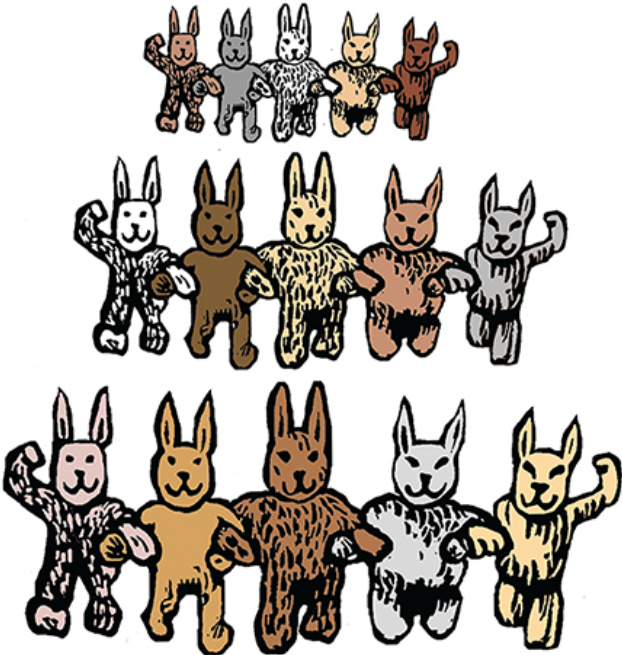
Isn’t it funny how bosses can often just ignore the law or maneuver their way around it, while we workers would get hammered for breaking the law? It’s almost as if it had something to do with which class has power, and which doesn’t! Isn’t there something in our preamble about that?

Case in point: A Fellow Worker in the Burgerville Workers Union was fired over a bagel not too long

ago. That’s right, a single bagel. A manager offered him the bagel during the break, but did not tell him he was still required to pay for it, and, when he didn’t, he was fired. He was a key organizer in the Union. Coincidence? Hardly!

Also, while a worker might be able to take a case to court and win, such cases often get dragged out for a long time, especially with the bosses’ well-paid lawyers manipulating the proceedings. Meanwhile, workers still have to not only eat and keep roofs over their heads, and the legal costs have to be taken care of.

# Bosses Beware



# When we're screwed, we multiply!

While it’s true that recent labor history has been less bloody, we’d be fools to think that such things cannot happen, especially in the current environment.

Speaking of lessons from history, let us not forget that the history of labor in the United States is a bloody one. “Goons and ginks and company finks and the deputy sheriffs who made the raid,” as Woody Guthrie put it in “Union Maid,” would often not only break up strikes, but arrest workers, brutalize strikers, and, at times, even kill labor leaders.

## JOIN THE MADISON IWW TODAY!

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers’ ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses’ orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

Meetings are on the first Monday of each month, 6:30 PM, at the Wil-Mar Center (953 Jenifer Street). You can send e-mail to: [madison@iww.org](mailto:madison@iww.org)

## Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

**TO JOIN:** Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month’s dues to:

**Madison IWW GMB, P.O. Box 2442, Madison, WI 53701**

Initiation is the same as one month’s dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income.

If your monthly income is under \$2000, dues are \$11 a month.

If your monthly income is between \$2000 and \$3500, dues are \$22 a month.

If your monthly income is over \$3500 a month, dues are \$33 a month.

☐ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.

☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.

☐ I will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes a subscription to to *Prairie Fire* and an electronic subscription to the *Industrial Worker*, newsletter of the IWW.





# HOW TO MAKE ANTI REPRESSION PHONE CALLS DURING THE PRISON STRIKE

1. Get in a group of four or five. Make a group chat.
2. Designate someone as a point person to check <https://incarceratedworkers.org/phone-zaps/> for new call-in campaigns.
3. When the point person sees a new campaign listed, post it in your group. Decide with your group when you'll call. *Intend to flood the lines over a few hours, instead of having calls trickle in over a week.* The post will have a contact, a phone number (and maybe an email, fax, etc.) and a "script" with the demand. People should call as many times as they can!

## 4. WHEN IT'S CALL TIME

1. (If you feel like it,) block your number by dialing \*67 before the prison phone number.
2. Call the prison official designated in the post and say something based on the "script" included in the post. If you don't get them immediately, ask to be transferred to them. If the person on the line won't transfer you, express your concern to them instead. The more details the better; it reveals that you know exactly what they're doing!
3. In rare cases they may ask for your information. You're under no obligation to give it! You can give something fake or just continue to repeat your concern.
5. Report how many calls you made and any information you received from the prison ("Answering machine full" or "Warden said he's received calls all day") to the point person.
6. The point person should submit how your group did to [iwoc@iww.org](mailto:iwoc@iww.org) so we can all keep track of how it's going!
7. Repeat over the course of the strike... then continue to support incarcerated people with calls, letters, and commissary money! Connect with local prisoner support groups like IWOC, Anarchist Black Cross, Black & Pink, Fight Toxic Prisons, and Survived & Punished.

**FOR A WORLD WITHOUT CAGES!**

Just last year, we saw Fellow Workers in the IWW injured on both coasts while standing up to fascists. While that wasn't labor organizing or action as such, it was in defense of the working class and points out the importance of the IWW's General Defense Committee. It is quite possible, though, that such vigilantes could visit labor picket lines, too.

Now, this is not to scare people away from organizing or taking action. To the contrary! It shows why we **MUST** organize as the working class and stand with each other in solidarity.

There's so many more of us than there are of them! There is safety in solidarity! Our predecessors faced much worse than we do, and they still organized and took action, because they knew they could not do otherwise!

It does mean, though, that we need to be prepared.

As a restricted fund, the strike fund will not be used for other union expenses or be subject to the usual branch budgeting procedure.

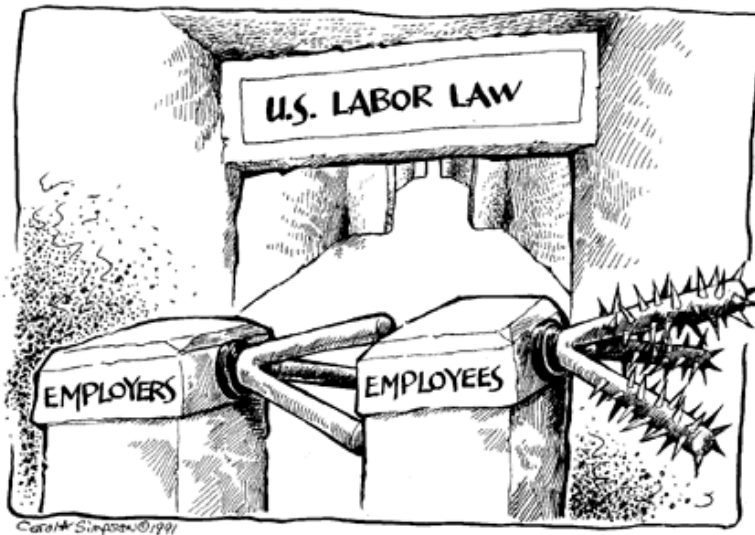
A good way to think of it would be as a "rainy day savings fund." I'm sure many people in the Madison area can appreciate that metaphor right now! (Even as I write this, the sky is darkening and the rain is coming, threatening to push the water levels higher!)

The Madison IWW will decide democratically, as a branch, on cases that arise, determining, in consultation with those seeking assistance, whether to give assistance, how much assistance to give,

and whether it will be in the form of a grant or an interest-free loan.

If the need is immediate, and a branch meeting cannot be convened in time, a branch officer (i.e., the treasurer or the secretary) can decide to grant provisional assistance, with such assistance to be ratified or, possibly, modified (perhaps to give more assistance on top of the temporary assistance) at the next branch meeting.





Of course, as always, we also encourage you to join the IWW and help us organize and take action, perhaps at your workplace!

We hope that this strike fund will make it clear that we take concerns about workers' well-being and safety when organizing and taking action very seriously, and that we will not leave workers "high and dry" (hmm,

maybe that metaphor doesn't work so well for Madison right now) if something happens.

Our strike fund is not very large right now, only about \$1000, but that should be considered "seed money." We would like to raise money to increase the strike fund, and, as a restricted fund, all money raised specifically for the strike fund will stay in the strike fund and will only be used for the purposes described earlier.

If you would like to donate, you can send donations to us at: Madison IWW, P.O. Box 2442, Madison, WI 53701. Or, you can give it to us in person, such as if you see us at an event, or if you come to one of our meetings on the first Monday of each month at the Wil-Mar Center 953 Jenifer Street in Madison (let us know if you'd need childcare). We can also be reached via e-mail at [madison@iww.org](mailto:madison@iww.org).

If you want your donation to go to the strike fund, please be sure to specify that. Otherwise, the donation would go into our general funds (although, of course, we wouldn't mind those donations, either!)

In closing, we would like to encourage other unions to prepare for organizing and job actions and the risks associated with them. We hope you're not going to simply rely on elections and lobbying. We cannot just hope for politicians to help us. We need to organize and act in our workplaces, in our own interests.

Solidarity!



*We all agree to spread this strike throughout the prisons of Ameri\$\$\$a! From August 21st to September 9th, 2018, men and women in prisons across the nation will strike in the following manner:*

1. **Work Strikes:** Prisoners will not report to assigned jobs. Each place of detention will determine how long its strike will last. Some of these strikes may translate into a local list of demands designed to improve conditions and reduce harm within the prison.
2. **Sit-ins:** In certain prisons, men and women will engage in peaceful sit-in protests.
3. **Boycotts:** All spending should be halted. We ask those outside the walls not to make financial judgments for those inside. Men and women on the inside will inform you if they are participating in this boycott. We support the call of Free Alabama Movement Campaign to "Redistribute the Pain" 2018 as Bennu Hannibal Ra-Sun, formerly known as Melvin Ray has laid out (with the exception of refusing visitation). See these principles described here: <https://redistributethepain.wordpress.com/>.
4. **Hunger Strikes:** Men and women shall refuse to eat.

#### How You Can Help:

- Make the nation take a look at our demands. Demand action on our demands by contacting your local, state, and federal political representatives with these demands. Ask them where they stand.
- Spread the strike and word of the strike in every place of detention.
- Contact a supporting local organization to see how you can be supportive. If you are unsure of who to connect with, email [millionsforprisonersmarch@gmail.com](mailto:millionsforprisonersmarch@gmail.com)
- Be prepared by making contact with people in prison, family members of prisoners, and prisoner support organizations in your state to assist in notifying the public and media on strike conditions.
- Assist in our announced initiatives to have the votes of people in jail and prison counted in elections.

**For the Media:** Inquiries should be directed to [prisonstrikesmedia@gmail.com](mailto:prisonstrikesmedia@gmail.com)

Press release issued by Jailhouse Lawyers Speak



**PRESS RELEASE: NATIONAL PRISONERS STRIKE**  
**AUGUST 21st - SEPTEMBER 9th 2018**

Men and women incarcerated in prisons across the nation declare a nationwide strike in response to the riot in Lee Correctional Institution, a maximum security prison in South Carolina. Seven comrades lost their lives during a senseless uprising that could have been avoided had the prison not been so overcrowded from the greed wrought by mass incarceration, and a lack of respect for human life that is embedded in our nation's penal ideology. These men and women are demanding humane living conditions, access to rehabilitation, sentencing reform and the end of modern day slavery.

These are the **NATIONAL DEMANDS** of the men and women in federal, immigration, and state prisons:

- 1. Immediate improvements to the conditions of prisons and prison policies that recognize the humanity of imprisoned men and women.
- 2. An immediate end to prison slavery. All persons imprisoned in any place of detention under United States jurisdiction must be paid the prevailing wage in their state or territory for their labor.
- 3. The Prison Litigation Reform Act must be rescinded, allowing imprisoned humans a proper channel to address grievances and violations of their rights.
- 4. The Truth in Sentencing Act and the Sentencing Reform Act must be rescinded so that imprisoned humans have a possibility of rehabilitation and parole. No human shall be sentenced to Death by Incarceration or serve any sentence without the possibility of parole.
- 5. An immediate end to the racial overcharging, over-sentencing, and parole denials of Black and brown humans. Black humans shall no longer be denied parole because the victim of the crime was white, which is a particular problem in southern states.
- 6. An immediate end to racist gang enhancement laws targeting Black and brown humans.
- 7. No imprisoned human shall be denied access to rehabilitation programs at their place of detention because of their label as a violent offender.
- 8. State prisons must be funded specifically to offer more rehabilitation services.
- 9. Pell grants must be reinstated in all US states and territories.
- 10. The voting rights of all confined citizens serving prison sentences, pretrial detainees, and so-called "ex-felons" must be counted. Representation is demanded. All voices count!

**Proposal for an IWW**  
**Contingent Worker Caucus**

by x373121

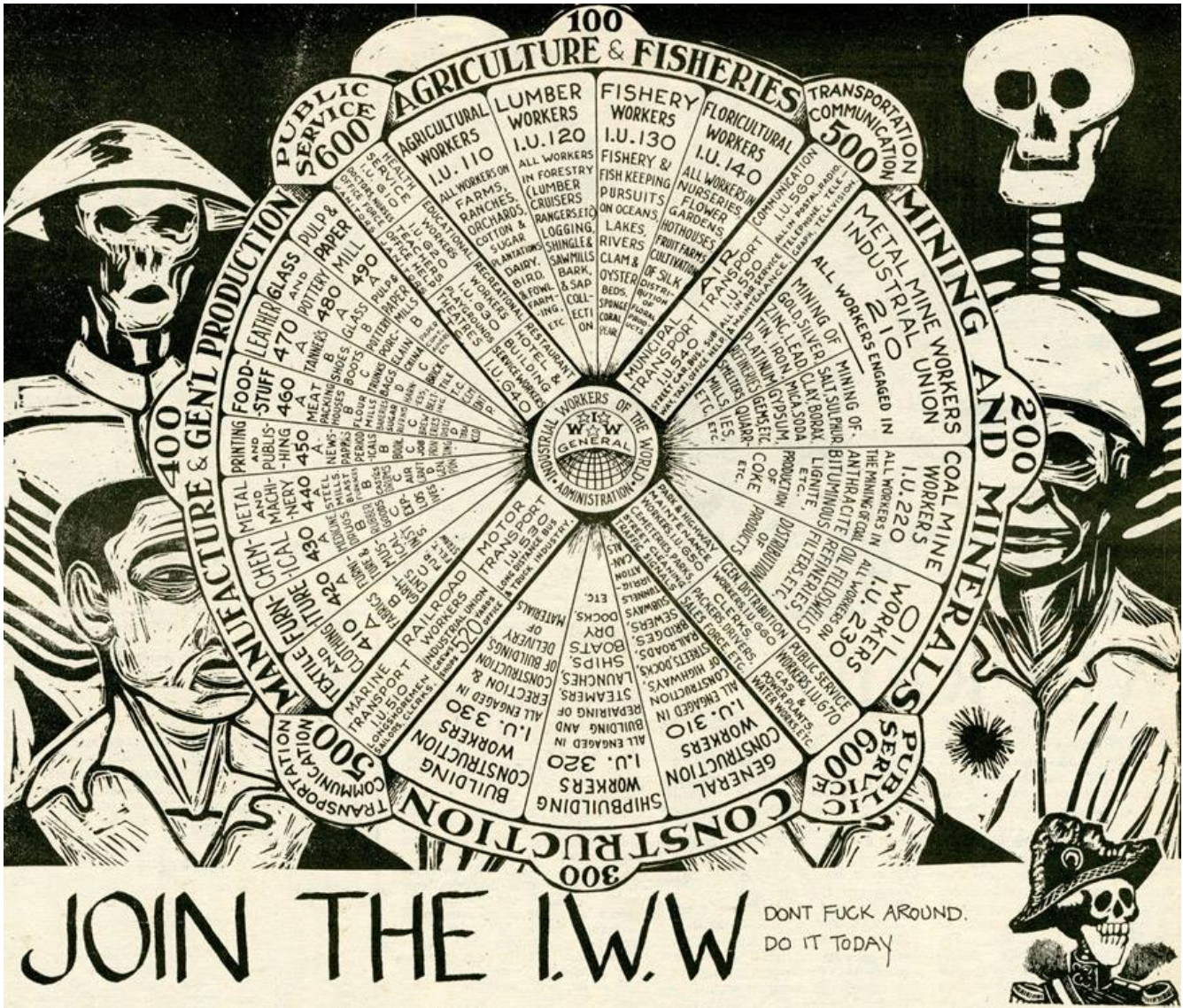
There have been a few times in recent years when Fellow Workers in the IWW have proposed the idea of adding an Industrial Union for "temporary" and/or "gig" workers, including a proposal to the 2018 convention this Labor Day weekend.

I worked in temp jobs through a temp agency while I was a college student, since I worked for the college

while classes were in session, but not during breaks, so I did temp work during breaks to make money in the meantime.

As a temp worker, I was most definitely not working in a different industry from the other workers at the work sites. We were all there, all on the same factory floor, doing the same work for the same industry.

The only difference is that I and the other temp workers were technically employed by the temp agency rather than the actual work site. But the agency itself was not really our workplace, as such.





I think we need to remember what “industry” means in the IWW lexicon and why our industrial union structure is the way it is, set up according to production.

In such terms, temporary workers and freelance workers are not an “industry,” but, rather, a category of workers that cuts across industries.

Based on my experience, I believe that such workers should remain in the industrial unions for the industries in which they actually work.

Putting temp workers into a separate industrial union could result in workers in the same workplace, on the same factory floor, being split between different industrial unions because some of them are temps, etc., which is just the sort of problem that industrial unionism seeks to avoid in the first place.

Let’s suppose there was an organizing effort in the sheet metal factory where I worked for a summer as a temp over, say, safety concerns (some of the “regulars” there had really nasty huge bubbly scars on their arms that would’ve been horror movie worthy when they were fresh -- I also remember my father wincing when I told him I was going to be working there, since he knew about the safety issues they’d had). That would be under Industrial Union 440, Metal and Machinery Workers. I and the other

temps who were there should’ve been included in that effort, but putting temp workers into a different industrial union, despite working on the same factory floor, would make that more difficult.

Also, temp workers should be included because, if there’s a strike, a temp agency would be the easiest way for the employer to bring in scabs. (Of course, the issue of the temp agency being the temps’ technical employer would be a factor to consider in any action, but any action is going to have its complications.)

I also think that freelance / “gig economy” workers should remain in the industrial union for the industries in which they work, again based on the reasons for the industrial union structure, organized according to production.

For instance, Uber and Lyft drivers should be in Industrial Union 530, Ground Transportation and Transit Workers and organize with workers in the “traditional” cab companies and work together towards dumping the bosses off their backs in their industry, whether they be cab company bosses or gig app bosses, rather than allowing themselves to be divided and conquered by being played off each other.

However, this is not to say that I don’t appreciate the desire to organize temp workers, gig workers,



To offer a single example, the state of Florida's Department of Transportation paid the state's Department of Corrections 19 million dollars last year in a contract for prison labor. Little has changed since one hundred years ago when many of that state's first roads were built by convict-leased former slaves.

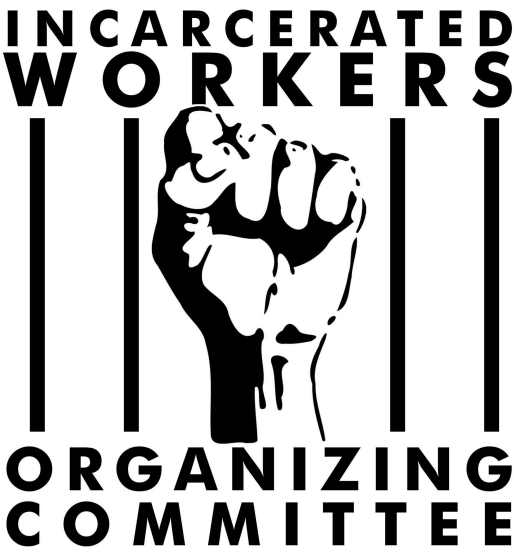
In places where prisoners do get paid a nominal amount, it's actually going down. As of last year, the average of the minimum daily wages paid to incarcerated workers for non-industry prison jobs is now 86 cents, down from 93 cents reported in 2001. The average maximum daily wage for the same prison jobs has declined more significantly, from \$4.73 in 2001 to \$3.45 today.

But prisoners don't just maintain the roads and toil in license plate factories. They actually run the entire prison system too. They cook, they clean, they paint, they weld, they repair cars, they do plumbing and maintain waste treatment facilities, they staff law libraries. All while prison guards generally stand and watch.

While it is encouraging to see some unions pushing back against prison privatization, it is a push that needs to be redirected against the prison system as a whole. Prison guards are modern day slave overseers whether the prison is private or public. No one grows up wanting to be in that role, and studies

have concluded that those who are entrenched in it bring that violence back into their own households and communities.

Just as environmentalists call for a just transition away from dirty energy, unions must call for a just transition away from prisons and over-policing. Valuable labor power is wasted in overseeing prison slaves that deserve actual rehabilitation and opportunities for release.



To be clear, when we speak of ending mass incarceration and abolition of prison slavery, we call for the immediate redistribution of the billions spent in policing and prisons into good jobs and social programs that address the roots of our social problems including racism, substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty and mental illness. These are social issues that

will never be resolved by policies like the “war on drugs” or criminalizing immigration.

Come this Labor Day, for those who hear the call, we suggest blockades of prison labor facilities, encampments at their gates, and steadfast resolve to end slavery once and for all.

Endorsed by :  
Gainesville IWOC and IWW General Membership Branch (FL) and Tampa IWW





perhaps, student workers. (This concept isn't always the most clear-cut, so one of the things we may need to work out is exactly whom it would include.)

It seems to me that the IWW's philosophy and history make it an ideal union to organize such workers, particularly since such workers are often ignored by business unions that are not always set up to accommodate us very well. Also, for some, particularly gig workers, freelance workers, and so-called "independent contractors," the National Labor Relations Board may not recognize them as being "employees" of their bosses, not recognize them as part of a bargaining unit, not grant them certification, etc., making a solidarity unionism approach necessary. We recognize that we don't need permission from the government or bosses to organize -- the only permission we need as workers is our own.

So, if you're interested in starting something like this, please get in touch, and let's see what we can do! Also, what form should it take, at least to start with? A Facebook group? A listserv? Skype meetings? Local in-person meetings? Something else?

Please offer suggestions, whether you plan to participate in the caucus or not. I'd love to hear what my Fellow Workers have to say about this.

Thank you, and solidarity!

## **WHY THE END OF PRISON SLAVERY COULD BE THE REBIRTH OF ORGANIZED LABOR**

### **The End of Prison Slavery, the Rebirth of Working Class Resistance**

## **A LABOR DAY CALL TO ACTION**

Are you pissed off about the recent attacks against public employee unions? Are you disturbed by the continuation of literal slavery in the prison system?

This Labor Day weekend take it to the barricades!

This is a call to establish encampments and coordinate direct actions surrounding the Labor Day weekend at the site of prison labor camps. Inspired by the recent wave of #AbolishICE organizing, prison abolitionists and labor activists have joined forces to call for an escalation of the movement to defend public service unions, stop prison slave labor, and end mass incarceration.

As prisoners launch what is anticipated to be the largest national prison strike in U.S. history, between August 21- September 9, we on the outside must also ask ourselves, what are we willing to do and how much are we willing to risk to demonstrate our solidarity to fellow workers?

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court announced one of the most devastating blows to union membership in decades. The Janus decision specifically targeted public employees of state and local agencies, in which the Court decreed that public workers who

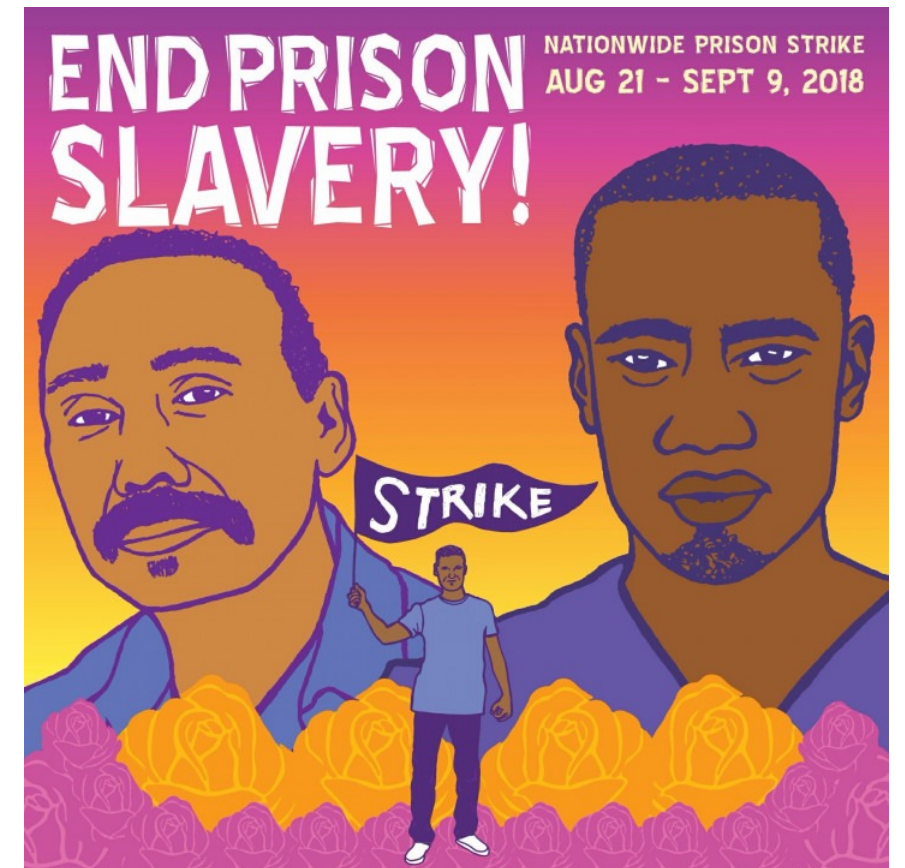
benefit from their unions' collective-bargaining efforts owe no obligation to offer financial support for those efforts. This ruling opens the door for corporate interests to decimate this organizing force of nearly 7 million members that has consistently stood up against privatization, including in the prison industry.

All hope is not lost and those whose dedication to working-class power is unhindered by right wing attacks know that this is a time to step up, not back. It's a time to fight harder and smarter.

So let's cut to the chase. It's no secret that police and prisons usurp a majority of funds available to the general budgets of state and local governments. It is not uncommon to have a quarter to half of any given city or county budget be dumped into police or sheriff coffers. As of 2017, the best attempts to assess total costs of prison and policing land around \$182 billion a year. According to reports, all this spending does little towards achieving actual public safety.

This spending behavior has created a police state and a national prison population that exceeds the entire population of major cities like Philadelphia and Dallas, as well as that of at least 14 US states. It has become a nation unto itself, comprised of exiles deprived of basic constitutional and human rights

under the guise of empty words like "corrections." For example, six million Americans have been denied access to the ballot based on a criminal conviction, not to mention their limited access to Due Process, Free Speech and other basic rights. These are all issues raised in the 10 primary demands of striking prisoners, initially presented by the organization Jailhouse Lawyers Speak.



The conditions prisoners face are constantly being exposed for abuse, exploitation, racism and brutal violence. Prisoners are not our enemies. They are neighbors, friends and family members. They are people who may have once worked in our communities, but due to a variety of circumstances including racism, poverty and mental illness, and domestic abuse, they are now locked in overcrowded human warehouses.